

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

For Immediate Release  
July 13, 2005

Contact: Lynette Maselli  
Public Information Specialist  
304-558-3707 x126

### **INSURANCE COMMISSION INVESTIGATES FRAUDULENT SCHEME THAT RESULTS IN PLEA AGREEMENT**

**CHARLESTON, WV** – West Virginia Insurance Commissioner, Jane L. Cline, announced today that insurance agent Dorsey R. Ash of the Ash Insurance Agency, Inc. has agreed to plead guilty to one count of embezzlement, a felony; and one count of conducting a fraudulent scheme, also a felony.

The Insurance Commission's Fraud Unit began its investigation in February when a representative of a Mississippi insurance company related that they had been unable to collect payment for policies that had been sold by Mr. Ash. Several more complaints of alleged wrongdoing followed.

"Fraud is a crime that saturates every type of insurance and makes victims of all consumers by inflating premiums and increasing the cost of buying goods and services" Cline said. "We are committed to reducing insurance fraud; a crime that costs consumers nationwide billions of dollars each year."

The Insurance Commission's Fraud Unit conducted the investigation in cooperation with the Harrison County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Bridgeport Police Department, the West Virginia State Police, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NCIB).

A Fraudulent scheme covers multiple criminal acts and numerous victims, in this instance, a number of policy holders doing business with the Ash Insurance Agency, Inc. were victimized. The Harrison County Prosecuting Attorney's office is in the process of determining a date for the entry of the plea before the Circuit Court of Harrison County.